FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER

JUNE 1989

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FEDERATION NEWS

The Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers is a network of women-controlled clinics sharing staff, training and resources.Our goal is to enable women to make informed choices about their health care and reproduction through the provision of self-help health education and gynecological services. We work together and with others to ensure that women have the information and power to control their bodies and their lives.

RU 486: THE FRENCH ALTERNATIVE

The Federation Visits France to Study New Abortion Method

Carol Downer, Director of the Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers and Janet Callum, Associate Director, Atlanta FWHC, met this spring in Paris with medical personnel involved in the development and use of RU 486, key public officials and women who had experienced RU 486 abortions. We wanted to learn first hand about this successful French alternative AND offer an American feminist presence to balance the anti-abortion forces reaching across the Atlantic.

Women in France who choose to abort using RU 486 receive 3 pills followed by a shot of prostaglandin two days later. This method has proved to be highly successful and far preferable to using only the RU 486 pill. Current RU 486 trials in the U.S. do not incorporate the use of prostaglandin. RU 486 is administered in a medical setting.

The women we interviewed who had taken RU 486 were very pleased with the results. They reported little discomfort and were very satisfied with the support they received during the procedure.

The women feel comfortable in the hospital setting and prefer to remain there until the abortion is complete, generally within a few hours after receiving the shot.

While clinical trials are currently underway on RU 486 in many countries, Hoechst, the German company which controls its distribution is strongly anti-abortion and refuses to permit any further trials or marketing of the product outside France.

We also had the opportunity to discuss the current U.S. abortion situation in meetings with key French government and family planning officials. They were extremely responsive to our efforts to guarantee abortion rights here and to make RU 486 available worldwide. We discussed ways in which they could help us and returned encouraged by their support and concern.

The Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers believes that RU 486 should be available to women here. We are committed to making this important new technology available to American women.

SELF HELP ABORTION VIDEO FIGHTS BACK

In light of the pending Supreme Court abortion ruling, the Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers has produced a new video, **No Going Back**, which offers women the information they may need in order to take abortion techniques into their own hands. **No Going Back** describes the self-help group technique of menstrual extraction, a safe, simple, low technology abortion procedure women can learn to perform.

The Federation believes that women have a right to know what options are available to them should their right to abortion be restricted or overturned by the court.This critically important 28 minute VHS video tape is available through the FWHC. For more information or to order, please refer to the request for information form on the back of this newsletter.

FWHC JOINS PRO-CHOICE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

Marching with over 300,000 pro-choice supporters, delegates from the Georgia, Oregon and California Feminist Women's Health Centers helped send a clear message to the Supreme Court to uphold a woman's right to a safe and legal abortion. Women from all walks of life and many who had never before felt the need to support legalized abortion made this March for Women's Equality, Women's Lives, sponsored by NOW, the largest ever in Washington on behalf of women's rights.

CLINIC NEWS

New Clinic Manager and Four Clinic Supervisors Appointed

Laurie Ross, B.S.N. is the new clinic manager of the FWHC. Active at the center for the past six years, she also served on the Board of Directors of the FWHC from 1985-1988.

As part of our commitment to providing the highest quality care in our clinic, we recently created the position of Clinic Supervisor. Our four supervisors, who work on a rotating basis, help coordinate abortion and Well Woman clinics and evaluate and train health workers.

SECOND TRIMESTER ABORTION SERVICES

We currently perform Dilation and Evacuation (D&E) abortion services to 21 weeks following the last menstrual period (LMP). Between 13-16 weeks LMP, D&E services require a one day, two-step procedure. Between 17-21 weeks LMP, the D&E procedure is accomplished in two steps on two consecutive days with the overnight laminaria technique. Women do not remain at the clinic overnight.

We offer all D&E clients tranquillizers or I.V. medications such as Sublimaze to aid in sedation and for pain relief. We have had great success with these drugs. As they are short-acting, women experience very little nausea and feel "back to normal" in approximately one hour. We do require that D&E clients be accompanied by someone who can drive them home.

CERVICAL CAP AVAILABLE

Approved for nationwide sale by the FDA in May 1988, the cervical cap is a simple thimble-like device that a woman inserts herself. The cap fits tightly over the cervix, can be worn for 48 to 72 hours at a time and does not require spermicide. Recent studies show that the cap is nearly identical in its effectiveness to the diaphragm. The FWHC fits the cap and offers training seminars in cap fitting for medical professionals.

Athens FWHC Active in the Community

The Athens FWHC continues to serve women in its university community with pregnancy screening, Well-Woman clinics, abortion referral, post abortion checkups and the fitting of cervical caps.

Besides providing clinic services, the FWHC also provides leadership to the Athens pro-choice movement having helped organize the Athens Pro-choice Action League (APAL) to coordinate abortion rights activities in the community. The FWHC has also organized for better prenatal care and childbirth options. For example, we supported a local home birth practitioner fighting to maintain her practice in the face of local medical opposition. In addition, the Athens health center serves as a resource to community members who need information or materials about women's health. Clinic personnel also give presentations to community groups and college classes on women's health care and reproductive rights.

DONOR INSEMINATION SERVICES

Responding to a need for donor insemination services, particularly for unmarried women, the FWHC offers a complete D.I. program including Fertility Awareness Classes, comprehensive physical and gynecological examinations and orientations to familiarize women with all aspects of D.I.including sperm banking and donor screening.

We also hold orientations for women considering D.I. versus adoption and women planning private inseminations. While we do not offer advanced fertility work, we can assist women with fertility testing and have begun intrauterine inseminations for women who have been in the program for an extended period without getting pregnant. Women in the program pay on a fee for visit basis.

We are happy to report that, so far this year, one woman in the program has given birth and there have been three conceptions.

PROJECT REACHING OUT TO STOP AIDS

Under the auspices of the FWHC, the Women's Aids Prevention Project (WAPP) is successfully educating women, particularly black women at high risk, about AIDS. Women of color are contracting and dying from AIDS at a disproportionately high rate. The WAPP is one of the few projects in Atlanta specifically providing outreach to black women. The program is also available to any woman interested in learning and sharing more information about AIDS.

Most successful among the project's programs have been the many "Do It Safe Parties."

At a "Do It Safe" party, women learn factual information about AIDS and how to prevent it in a comfortable group setting. Other programs include a speaker's bureau, facilitators training, targeted outreach and an HIV testing and counseling program.

The WAPP is supported with physical and managerial support from the FWHC and funded through grants from the Fund for Southern Communities and the Heartstrings Foundation. For more information contact Dazon Dixon, WAPP Director at the FWHC, 351-7105

ITEMS OF INTEREST

GARAL MEETINGS

The Georgia Abortion Rights Action League (GARAL) holds its membership/public affairs meetings the third Tuesday of each month at the Intown YWCA,957 N. Highland, 7p.m. Members and others interested are invited to attend. For more information call GARAL at 377-2181.

FWHC WAS PROUD TO SPONSOR THE ATLANTA PREMIERE OF **BUILDING BOMBS**, an important new film examining the moral and environmental dilemmas facing workers at the Savannah River Plant.

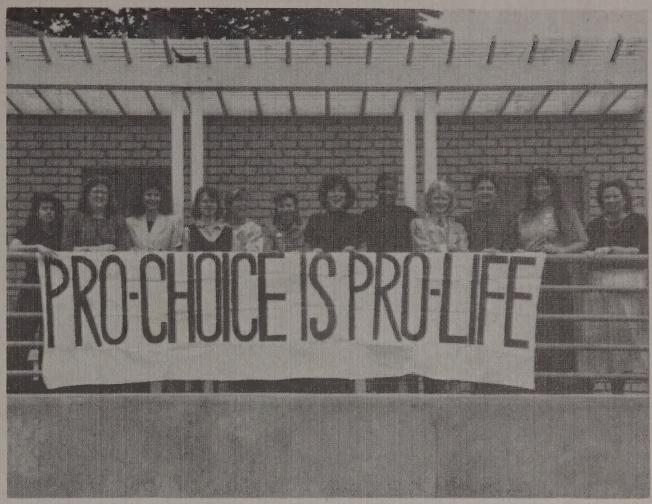
A Note from our Executive Director

As longtime advocates of women's rights, alll of us here at the FWHC are proud of our ongoing success in meeting women's needs. Despite the increased harassment from anti-abortion forces which women and women's clinics have had to endure over the past four years, thousands of women have continued to benefit from our services without difficulty.

This is due to the commitment of our staff to providing high quality, respectful services and also to the dedicated volunteer escorts who are trained to assist and support our clients in entering the clinic. Since the safety and dignity of our clients is our foremost concern,we inform clients when they may encounter picketers and explain the role of the escorts when picketers are present.

Although the threat to women's reproductive freedom is greater now than at any time in the past 16 years, with support from our staff, the community,our clients and their families, we will continue our leadership role in guaranteeing abortion rights for all women.

Lynne Randall



FWHC STAFF AT OUR ATLANTA CLINIC

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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION/MEMBERSHIP -FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER

Name_____Title_____

Agency/Office_____Phone_____

Address_____

City_____State_____Zip_____

____YES I want to become a member of the FWHC
____YES I am interested in attending Board Meetings
____YES Send information about how I can help personally and financially

As a ____NEW/____RENEWING member, I am enclosing $25 for one year's membership.

PLEASE SEND ME (note quantity)

BROCHURES (free)

____General Services
____Abortion Information
____Donor Insemination
____Cervical Cap
____College-Aged Women
____Athens, GA FWHC
____AID Atlanta and AIDS Information
____Federation of FWHC's Membership

COMMUNITY SERVICES:

____Personal visit/touring information
____School/Organization Health Education Presentations
____Self Help/Safe-Sex Education Workshops
____ Political Education /Awareness Information

REFERRAL ITEMS (free):

____Rolodex card(s)
____Business Card(s)
____Fee card(s)

SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS/VIDEO

____*How to Stay Out of the Gynecologist's Office ($10.00)*
____*Woman-Centered Pregnancy and Birth* ($12.00)
____*a book about birth control* (Montreal Health Press, $1.00)
____*a book about sexually transmitted diseases* (Montreal Health Press,$1.00)
____VIDEO *No Going Back* ($25.00)

SPECIAL REQUESTS:_____

• Please add $2.00 per item for postage and handling.

_____

_____

Send check/money order to:
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